



# CIDDD-UG NEWSLETTER

*(LET'S HELP THE COUNTRY & THE WORLD HEAL)*

**VOL NO. 002, SECOND QUARTER 2020**

## LOCKDOWN IN PALLISA – SECOND QUARTER NEWSLETTER 2020



**Top-Bottom; Pallisa main street business and main market inset on lockdown**

Just as it has been in the past, CIDDD-UG after a hectic year of 2019, celebrated her entry into New Year 2020 with plans to continue championing positives in democratic governance. However hardly two months into 2020 than the tragic news about the breakout of the deadly coronavirus, the speed at which it harvested human lives from Wuhan province in China and its spread globally, plunged the world into panic. More alarming was the fact that it devastated the first world countries with strong economies, precision in research, ultra modern and vibrant health systems. This prompted leaders world over including Uganda to hurriedly slap a total lockdown on their countries

as they struggled to find means and strategies of containing the scourge. Alarm bells were sounded as the pandemic swept the first world off its feet and thousands of lives were lost in a matter of days with the rate of loss standing at hundreds of lives in a single day. The Vatican was thrown into confusion when the cleric close the Holy Father succumbed to the pandemic and rumors did the rounds that the pontiff himself was feared to have caught flu. The famous Ten Downing Street in London which is the seat of authority in the Great Britain was not spared by the sting of corona virus as the head of government in the title of prime minister was hit by the deadly disease.

Most of the third world nations, commonly referred to as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with limping health systems and weak economies were in more panic because they didn't have capacity to cope in case of full-blown outbreak of the problem as it had occurred in the first world. They quickly followed suit to declare lockdown which included dusk to dawn curfew in most countries.

### **NATIONAL RESPONSE**

- (1) In Uganda, the president who chairs the national coronavirus task force clamped down a series of restrictions to be observed during the lockdown and these were to be implemented without question. These include closure of schools, courts of law and places of worship, monthly and weekly markets, suspension of public transport, meetings, closure of businesses and shops save for those dealing in food items. Civil society work came to a standstill with many organizations temporarily suspending their highly essential

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services. Although these measures were the most appropriate in dealing with and checking spread of the killer disease, many other human rights trampled on yet they were imperatively required to improve the quality of life. This is when CIDD-UG started building scenarios on what it actually meant for the already weak local and national economy with majority of the populace living below the poverty line. Three likely scenarios from emergence of COVID-19 were built by CIDD-UG.

First was that the structures like the National and District taskforces as instituted by his excellence shall help the country gain quick recovery.

Secondly, Small and medium-size enterprises will be more acutely affected especially the less developed businesses that are largely managed by the most disadvantaged groups like women, persons with disability, persons living with HIV/AIDS and young people leading to undesired situations like GBV

Thirdly, if the covid 19 cases continued to grow throughout the year 2020, it will have potential to overwhelm the already strained local healthcare system. In this circumstance, the most affected shall be women and children who are the major beneficiaries of our health care system giving rise to increased mortality and morbidity rates requiring effective mitigation measures.

The above scenarios prompted CIDD-UG to start effective rapid assessments and reporting on the impact of lockdown on service delivery, performance of the district task force in implementing the COVID-19 SOPs in the district. Down load full reports here [www.cid dug.org](http://www.cid dug.org)

During the first 14 days of lockdown, CIDD-UG identified livelihood and service delivery challenges that included among others decline of household incomes, slump in business, rise in physical, economic, social and emotional violence, low supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to the frontline workers as well as poor accountability among others. The rapid assessment reports indicated among others urgent need for the following;

- 1) Boosting provision of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to the frontline workers
- 2) Facilitate the technical team of the district task force to enhance timely tracing and follow-up of cases
- 3) Embark on urgent community education including children on the possible dangers of COVID-19 and the precautionary measures
- 4) Increase and or boost uptake of family planning and counseling services at the lower health units.



**A child washing hands at their home without soap.**

- 5) Uphold the prevailing and high community vigilance to help contain the spread of COVID-19 among the communities.
- 6) Ensure holistic and balanced implementation of measures to contain COVID-19 with respect, promotion, protection and observance of Human Rights, as security personnel had become a thorn in the flesh of communities.



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CIDD-UG assessment reports formed the basis for discussion during the District task force meetings, something that not only improved the quality of task force response to COVID-19 but also earned CIDD-UG credibility before the district authorities.

The CIDD-UG

assessment report of the second 14 days of lockdown was also able to establish the impact of Lockdown on small business enterprises majorly managed by women, PWDs, PHAs and the youth and

made recommendations on how to help nature these businesses during the period of lockdown. This helped the RDC Pallisa Mr. Kyeune Ssenyonjo as chairman of the district COVID-19 Task force to consider calling upon stakeholders to enhance health education of market vendors on observance of COVID-19 guidelines, other than considering to close the market as he had previously been thought because the concerned persons were not cooperative in observing the COVID-19 guidelines. The continued operation of small businesses by vulnerable people in Pallisa was only made possible by CIDD-UG recommendations citing the need to strengthen small scale business during the period in question as a strategy to enable enhance



A boy at his business after 14 days of the lockdown – Pallisa



A Woman vendor at her business after 14 days of the lockdown – Pallisa

household incomes and reduce pressure of income deficiency in families that led to GBV in families during COVID-19 crisis.

## USE OF MEDIA

Right from the outset of the lockdown, CIDD-UG adopted the use of media as one of the effective strategies for disseminating messages on safety measures to communities. We also developed a safety flier that was disseminated through social media and

our staff joined the district task force in conducting radio talks about causes of infection and safety precautions for covid 19. We have also joined hands with partners like FOWODE to conduct more radio talks to educate communities on covid 19 safety measures and coping mechanisms.



L-R; The ED CIDD-UG Mr. Ejauten Fred, moderator & FOWODE staff during radio talks on Covid19 safety measures and coping mechanisms

During the same quarter, CIDD-UG conducted a UPE survey that stimulated Local and National debate on the need to fight the high rate of school dropouts in Pallisa district which was anticipated to worsen with outbreak of COVID-19. A survey which was conducted in 75 out of 76 Government aided primary schools between academic years of 2018 and 2019 in Pallisa had its finding disseminated in partnership with Action Aid Pallisa. The survey in brief established primary pupil completion rate of 42% with girl child being more affected. Download full report here

[www.ciddug.org](http://www.ciddug.org)



School management Committee strategizing how to reduce high rate of school dropouts – Pallisa

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## Objectives of the exercise were;

- ❖ To determine the magnitude of non completion of the primary education cycle in Pallisa District by gender
- ❖ To determine the financial loss suffered by the District from UPE and USE capitation arising from non completion of the primary school cycle and poor academic performance respectively
- ❖ To make recommendations to the district for improvement in education sector performance

## CIDD-UG ON MEDIA

As a result of the dissemination of the UPE report, media both print and electronic picked interest and carried the story for two days. This helped ignite both local and national debate to challenge government to adopt policy on non completion of the primary school cycle. CIDD-UG will continue to champion local data driven advocacy to improve on Government

**6 of 10 Pallisa pupils drop out of primary school – survey**

Pupils attend a lesson in a makeshift classroom at Bumadira Primary School in Bunyewa Sub-county, Sironko District on June 15, 2019. In Pallisa, majority of children do not complete the primary education cycle. PHOTO: MONICA WONGA

The high rate of school dropouts is blamed on poverty, irresponsible parents and negative cultural norms.

**BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA**

A new study has found that only four of 10 pupils in Pallisa District complete primary education cycle.

The study carried out on 76 government aided schools was conducted by the Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development Uganda, a non-governmental organisation.

The survey was conducted between the academic years of 2018 and 2019 in Pallisa District, which has a total of 76 government aided schools.

According to the findings, 13,317 children were enrolled into primary schools in 2012 but a total of 7,752 did not complete the primary school cycle by 2018, representing 58 per cent dropouts and 42 per cent completion.

The objective of the survey was to determine the enrolment and magnitude of non completion of the primary education cycle in the district.

The report also indicates that the district is also losing a huge sum of money in terms of Universal Primary Education (UPE) capitation grants due to high school dropouts.

"This implies that for the 7,715 children, who did not complete the primary school cycle, Pallisa District lost a total of Sh993,024,000 over a period under review," the report reads in part.

Mr Fred Ejautene, the coordinator of the project, said of 58 per cent of the children, who did not complete the primary education, 47 per cent are boys and 53 per cent are girls.

The report further indicates that most sub-counties with higher non-completion rates are Akosim with 78 per cent, Opiweta (72 per cent), Kamuge (68 per cent), Cheleku (67 per cent), Agule (66 per cent), and Kasoda (61 per cent) while those with lower non-completion are Apooong (37 per cent), Pallisa (45 per cent) and Pallisa Town Council (47 per cent).

Mr Ejautene said the district leadership needs to design strategies to reduce the number of school dropouts.

"This will help to provide and maintain quality education as a basis for developing quality human resources, eliminate societal disparities and inequalities as well as enhance fundamental and positive transformation of Pallisa District," he said.

Mr Francis Okurut, one of the residents, attributed the high rate of school dropouts to poverty, irresponsible parents and deep-rooted negative cultural norms.

Mr Okurut said traditional activities such as rice growing, where children are employed to scare away birds in the gardens, are also the major cause of school dropouts.

"During the rice growing season, many children tend to dodge school and instead prefer to earn a living in rice gardens due to the high levels of poverty," Mr Okurut said.

Mr Paul Kossa, a resident of Nansame, Kaucha Ward within Pallisa Town Council, said rampant teenage pregnancies and negative attitude towards education in the communities have worsened the situation.

"The still prevalent negative attitude by parents towards education is the biggest challenge that is crippling the education standards in the district," Mr Kossa said.

The Pallisa District chairperson, Mr John Michael Okurut, said cases of pupils failing to complete their education is due to the high levels of poverty.

"Majority of the parents can't afford to meet the basic needs of their children while at school," he said.

Mr Okurut said underage marriage is on the increase because parents marry off their children to get wealth.

"The district has tried to sensitise the communities about the dangers of marrying off their children but the information has not yet trickled into the hearts of our people," he said.

**LEADER SPEAKS**

The district education officer, Ms Agnes Lukendo, said some of these challenges that fuel the high levels of school drops are being addressed.

"We are trying to address some challenges but the parents have also failed to play their roles and responsibilities and this is also failing our efforts to curb the vice," she said.

Ms Lukendo said low bride price has also kept the education standards at low levels up to date.

"Parents marry off their children while at a tender age rather than investing in their children by taking them to school," she said.

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**THE DAY** we know that everything

**EDITORIAL**

**Let's fight high rate of school drop out**

**D**aily Monitor yesterday carried a story on findings of a survey on primary school dropout rates in Pallisa District. According to the study, only four out of 10 pupils in Pallisa complete primary education cycle.

The survey that was carried out in 75 of the 76 government aided schools between the academic years of 2018 and 2019, found out that of the 13,317 children who were enrolled in primary schools in 2012, a total of 7,752 did not complete the primary education cycle by 2018, representing 58 per cent drop out and a 42 per cent completion.

The survey conducted by Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development Uganda, a non-governmental organisation, also indicates that the district is losing a huge sum of money in terms of Universal Primary Education (UPE) capitation grants due to high school dropouts.

**The Issue:** According to the survey, 7,715 children who did not complete the primary school cycle, Pallisa District lost a total of Sh993,024,000 over the period under review.

**Our view:** Pallisa District residents and leaders blame the high primary school dropout rate on poverty, irresponsible parents and negative cultural norms. What the survey exposed in Pallisa is, sadly, also happening in other parts of the country, with parents marrying off their underage daughters to get wealth. Some parents go as far as pulling their underage daughters out of school and marrying them off because of their greed for wealth.

This unbecoming behaviour is reinforced by negative perceptions against educating girls in some communities. Education is important for every child, whether boy or girl. The authorities should ensure that girls and boys are given an equal opportunity to go to school.

Parents who neglect their duties of educating their children should be compelled to take them to school and the authorities should prosecute those who don't.

With the government introduction of UPE, even poor parents can now ensure that their children can at least complete primary school education. The authorities should ensure that this opportunity is utilised.

Some parents also pull their children out of school and engage them in activities such as farming, sand mining, and barbiting, among others. This irresponsible behaviour should be stopped by the authorities and parents who engage in such vice penalised.

Some children drop out of school on their own accord. It is the duty of parents and community leaders to persuade such children to stay in school because education is the key to personal success and societal development.

**Our commitment to you**

planning process through generating data for effective planning at both local and national levels. The report will also be used by CSOs focused on education advocacy to push for required policy changes and implementation to reduce drop out of especially the girl child from in the country and improving education sector performance

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